

IC 74-2070
1 October 1974

MEMORANDUM FOR: General Wilson

SUBJECT: Proposal for Systematic PRD Review
of National Intelligence

1. The principal function of the Product Review Division is, as the name (imperfectly) suggests, the review of finished national intelligence.* And the principal objective of such review is, obviously, to find ways to improve the quality and timeliness of national intelligence (including, not so incidentally, warning intelligence). PRD is, if you like, engaged in an endless quest, seeking first to identify problems of presentation and analysis and then engaging in a search for realistic solutions.

2. We have, as you know, a clear charter to perform this function and to pursue this objective. We have, in fact, done so in several instances with, I think, distinction. But, for a variety of reasons which I will not recite here, we have not done so regularly or in a consistent manner. I believe we should, and I believe we can. I thus propose the following:

a. In order to proceed with his work systematically, each PRD officer will review on a daily basis all important

*We are, in fact, the Office of National Intelligence Review (ONIR).

finished national intelligence issuances or the equivalent (including the NIB, NID, DIN, NIEs, and NIAMs, certain memoranda, and perhaps other studies and periodicals as well--all to be defined precisely later on).

b. In order to provide focus for his efforts, each officer will be guided in his review by the KIQs appropriate to his assigned area of interest. He will, in essence, assess the pertinence, adequacy, timeliness, and general quality of coverage on a given area or topic, as viewed in the main through a KIQ prism.

c. In order to maintain reviewing discipline and to compile an appropriate record for later use, each officer will maintain an informal (tho permanent) file of the results of his daily review, such a file to include notations of issuances reviewed, identification of subjects or articles specifically assessed, pertinence of coverage to appropriate KIQs, and principal conclusions, if any, arrived at as a result of that day's (or period's) review. (Forms might be useful to assist in such record keeping.)

d. In order to pass on our accumulating wisdom to other interested parties, PRD as a whole will issue (perhaps monthly) a periodical review and analysis of national intelligence,

as drawn from each officer's daily assessments and as shaped by our general concern for KIQ-oriented production. This PRD review (The National Intelligence Review?) could be organized according to topic and area, with perhaps an overall summary of highlights as an opening section, and could be distributed as a single journal or in sections. It could be relatively informal or fairly formal; could be disseminated narrowly or widely in the community; could be circulated first in draft to, say, the NIOs; and could make room for contributions from consumers or surveys of consumer attitudes. (A variety of questions about the nature of such a journal thus occur, but they need not be settled here and now.)

3. Regular, KIQ-oriented, daily review of published intelligence and the periodic~~all~~ issuance of PRD assessments based on that kind of systematic reviewing activity would serve a number of purposes. It would: (1) organize and improve PRD's overall effort; (2) provide data and background for special PRD studies, including post-mortem reports; (3) provide insights into the community's activities and identify particular problems susceptible to PRD analysis; (4) help to identify gaps (and perhaps redundancies) in finished intelligence; (5) offer a regular source of information and assistance to the NIOs,

most notably in their responsibilities associated with the KIQ/KEP enterprise; (5) do much the same for the D/DCI/IC and other officers in ICS; and, ⁽⁷⁾ in general, support the mission of the DCI, especially insofar as it relates to product improvement.

4. Finally, we propose that PRD test the procedures and concepts outlined above by conducting a one or two month trial exercise. We would ask each area and topical officer to participate, to maintain appropriate records, and to contribute at the end to a mock-up of the contemplated journal. But we would seek during this period to review only a limited number of national intelligence issuances--say the NIB and any NIO-sponsored joint memoranda, NIEs, or NIAMs. We might wish to seek the informal cooperation of a (receptive) NIO, seeking in the main his responses to our procedures and assessments. But I would avoid seeking any formal concurrence from the NIOs during the test period (and perhaps thereafter as well). We welcome your comments.


Chief, PRD/IC

STAT

HIGHLIGHTS OF OCTOBER PRD REVIEW OF NIB, DIN, etc.

1. ADEQUACY OF COVERAGE

a. Plethora of items of marginal or no interest to top policy level.

b. Overkill on Brezhnev visit to East German parade and routine improvements in East German and Bulgarian military capabilities.

c. But good coverage on Soviet economics, Soviet relations with Arabs, Yugoslavia.

d. Almost no coverage of Soviet internal political and Sino-Soviet relations during October.

e. Tech intell gets short shrift because NIB and DIN editorial staffs lack tech "advocates." Tech items not used are often more significant than many non-tech items which are used. (But part of problem is that S&T types feel more comfortable using their own S&T publications.)

f. NIB's exclusion of TK eliminates coverage, cuts out items, especially S&T items.

g. Economic intelligence does not fit comfortably into daily periodicals, primarily because of its multi-national nature and broad sweep. Primary media are OER weeklies (EIW and IOD), which top-policy people probably don't read. To remedy this, effort being made to increase input to NID.

2. QUALITY OF ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

a. Scatter-gun nature of DIN confusing. DIN contents generally weak. Many useless articles which seem designed for working-level analysts. Little analysis, often superficial when there. Production for production's sake.

b. Treatment in the DINs of more narrowly military subjects tended to be somewhat better; they were, in any case, more self-confident.

QUALITY OF ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS (continued)

c. On NIB--most articles benefited from concise and coherent exposition, not always true of the DINs, and offered some analysis of the events described. That the articles appeared a day or two later than similar articles in the DIN did not appear consequential.

d. NIB too long (17 pages) and contains too many marginal items for busy consumer.

e. Too much technical detail in S&T items--not enough analysis. Items should address significance rather than tech details.

3. RELATIONSHIP TO KIQs

a. Response to KIQs in literal sense is good--but only because KIQs are so broad.

b. Response to specific aspects of KIQs is poor, chiefly because items are reportorial rather than analytic.

c. KIQs per se do not influence NIB and DIN production very much.

d. Little real relevance to KIQs.

e. Nearly a third of the DINs and a somewhat larger fraction of the NIB articles had some relevance to the KIQs on Western Europe, but I suspect that in such instances both the KIQs and the articles were formed by the same, prior understanding of what was important. There were in both publications articles of considerable usefulness which had very little to do with the KIQs.

4. REDUNDANCY OF COVERAGE

a. NIB/DIN redundancy--an irritant to the consumer.

b. Only 25 percent overlap in NIB and DIN reporting (in re SEA)--clearly the two have different production standards.

5. PRD METHODOLOGY

- a. PRD review lacks significant input--consumer evaluations of product.
- b. All PRD officers should use same summary chart, or other tool, to draw up monthly conclusions.
- c. Add column on review form in re source.